

MINUTES
WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL HIRING COMMITTEE / SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, January 12, 2023

The Special Hiring Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met in-person at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 12, 2023, in the Trustees' Board Room, War Memorial Opera House, Chair Horn presiding.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: President Horn, Vice President Lui, Trustee Newstat, Trustee Wilsey, and Trustee Wright

Staff Present: Rob Levin, Acting Managing Director/Executive Secretary

Managing Director Job Description:

Chair Horn began the meeting noting that the Committee has convened to review, consider, and adopt recommendations on the proposed job description and hiring process for the position of Managing Director of the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center. He stated that the Board must meet in open session to discuss and act on procedural matters such as determining the overall selection process and the minimum qualifications for the position. He continued on that Board will meet in closed session in subsequent meetings to review candidate resumes and background material, prepare interview questions, interview candidates, and deliberate and act on nominating one or more candidates. President Horn also made note that Acting Managing Director/Executive Secretary Rob Levin has taken himself out of consideration for the Managing Director position and noted that this gives the Board a valuable insider person to help with the hiring process.

President Horn stated that in advance of the meeting, Committee members received a draft of the proposed Managing Director job description, prepared by staff. He reminded the Committee that under the City Charter, the War Memorial Board of Trustees has the sole authority for selecting and naming a Managing Director as well as the Assistant Managing Director of the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, and both positions serve at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees. President Horn remarked that previously when Managing Director Emerita Elizabeth Murray was preparing the job description, after serving in the position for 30 years, he encouraged her to put in everything she was responsible for in the role. He noted the current draft is the job description that was used when selecting John Caldon, updated recently to bring it in line with 2023 requirements for diversity, equity and inclusion.

President Horn opened the floor for discussion with the Committee members on the job description. Trustee Newstat raised the question of how much experience the Board would want in a Managing Director. The Committee agreed that rather than 8 years they prefer it to say "Proven successful experience." Trustee Wilsey noted that it was good to have someone who had experience working with City Hall, who understands San Francisco politics and the operations of the City and County of San Francisco. Trustee Wright noted that in the Position Summary of the job description it states that the Managing Director "creates the mission and long-term vision" for the Department and she believes that the Board of Trustees in fact creates the mission and long-term vision for the Department. The Committee agreed to modify the job description to say the Managing Director "is charged with implementing the mission and long-term vision of the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center."

Following discussion, and on motion of Trustee Newstat and seconded by Trustee Wilsey, the following recommendation was unanimously adopted, subject to approval by the Board of Trustees and the Department of Human Resources:

RECOMMENDED, By the Special Hiring Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco that it hereby recommends approval of the draft job description for the position of Managing Director of the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, with two modifications: replacing 8 years of experience with “Proven successful experience” and “charged with implementing the mission and long-term vision” in place of “creates the mission and long-term vision.”

President Horn turned to the subject of the hiring process and executive search firms. He noted that because the Board has autonomy with decision-making, the Board has not used a search firm in the past. He wanted to discuss how to do outreach and how staff would process and vet applications within the Department.

President Horn asked Acting Managing Director Rob Levin to explain how the job description would be distributed. Director Levin noted that the job description would be distributed through all City channels, the resident companies, the International Association of Venue Managers, and a list of diverse Bay Area arts organizations that was created by staff. President Horn asked Sharon Walton, Communications and Events Manager, to speak about how the draft list of these organizations was created. Sharon Walton addressed the Committee and noted that the list was created in light of the City’s Racial Equity mandate to cultivate a pool of diverse candidates. Ms. Walton noted the list began as a list of non-profit arts organizations, which was supplemented with members of City and County of San Francisco arts organizations involved in equity work, Bay Area community-based arts organizations and Bay Area cultural venues that rent out facilities. She stated that using this list to reach out more broadly to the communities that the War Memorial is committed to serving is an effective tool in recruiting culturally diverse candidates, while fostering new relationships and fulfilling the Trustees’ commitment to racial equity.

President Horn then asked Donna D’Cruz, Director of Finance & Administration for the Department, to present briefly on how the selection and vetting process would work if it was kept in-house within the Department. Donna D’Cruz addressed the Committee noting that she has been with the City for 24 years, working in 5 of the largest City Departments. She noted that throughout her time vetting candidates, she is confident that meeting with potential candidates over zoom helps in assessing knowledge, skills and abilities, before shortlisting them for an interview with the Committee. She noted that this process is dependent upon receipt of a qualified pool of candidates. Vice President Lui inquired about whether Ms. D’Cruz works with the Department of Human Resources. Ms. D’Cruz affirmed that she does, but more typically that would be with positions that are Civil Service hires, while this position is appointed by the Board. Director Levin remarked that he feels confident that the expertise exists in the Department to administer this search and hopes for a diverse candidate pool.

President Horn asked Ms. D’Cruz to speak to the timeline for hiring. Ms. D’Cruz responded that jobs are generally posted for 2-3 weeks, and if a robust pool is received from the initial outreach, optimistically it would be 3-4 months to complete the process. President Horn then turned to the question of search firms, and noted the City has pre-qualified search firms available. He stated that the Board would need to proffer an RFP to the search firm, which the Civil Service Department would have to approve, which would detract from the autonomy that the Board has under the Charter. President Horn stated that the War Memorial is not a typical City Department, but rather is a charitable trust that has more autonomy in how directors are selected. Trustee Wilsey agreed with President Horn based on her experiences doing searches in the past. President Horn also noted that if this process is not fruitful, the Committee can always look to a search firm in the future. The Committee agreed to the process and would wait to see the candidate pool that results from the outreach and posting of the job description.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment is an opportunity for members of the public to directly address the Trustees on items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee, but not on the agenda.

There being no public comment, President Horn closed public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Horn adjourned the meeting at 11:48 a.m.



Rob Levin
Executive Secretary